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Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

INRE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 ACDA-07 OPR-02 IO-13 SAM-01 SAB-01

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O P 051233Z AUG 76
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1446
INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE PRIORITY 48
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER
USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM
CINCUSNAVEUR, LONDON ENG
CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GER
CIA WASHDC
COMSIXTHFLT
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CTF SIX ZERO
CTF SIX ONE
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FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA
FOSIF ROTA SPAIN
DIA WASHDC
CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 6813

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MILI, PINS, PINT, LE
SUBJECT: LEBANESE SITUATION AUG. 5: SHAKY ARAB LEAGUE CEASEFIRE BEGINS; CABINET MEETING POSTPONED; TELL ZAATAR EVACUATION; CHRISTIAN SUCCESSES AT NABAA

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1. SUMMARY: TENUOUS CEASEFIRE UNDER ARAB LEAGUE AUSPICES BEGINS. SIMULTANEOUSLY, CEASEFIRE COMMITTEE PROVIDED FOR UNDER SYRIAN-PALESTINIAN AGREEMENT SUPPOSED TO MEET AT SOFAR AUGUST 5. TELL ZAATAR EVACUATION AUGUST 4 SUCCESSFUL DESPITE SOME HOSTILE FIRE FROM UNDETERMINED SOURCES. COUNCIL OF MINISTERS MEETING LACKS QUORUM AND IS POSTPONED, SINE DIE. MILITARY SITUATION GENERALLY QUIET ON EVE OF CEASEFIRE EXCEPT AT NABAA, WHERE SEVERAL LEFTIST LEADERS SURRENDER TO CHRISTIANS. CHRISTIANS CLAIM AREA NO LONGER "MILITARILY SIGNIFICANT." U.S. AMBASSADOR'S MOUNTAIN RESIDENCE HIT BY ARTILLERY ROUND. END SUMMARY.

2. ARAB LEAGUE CEASEFIRE. ARAB LEAGUE ANNOUNCED CEASEFIRE TO BEGIN 0800 LOCAL AUGUST 5, SIGNED BY ALL PARTIES. (BEIRUT 6809). THIS IS THIRD CEASEFIRE UNDER AL AUSPICES, AND 54TH CEASEFIRE ANPOUNCED IN LEBANON SINCE WAR BEGGAN. AGREEMENT ESTABLISHES FOUR AL OBSERVATION POSTS IN EAST BEIRUT, TWO IN WEST BEIRUT, THREE IN CITY OUTSKIRTS (TO INCLUDE AT TELL ZAATAR AND NABAA), AND ONE EACH AT JEZZINE, ALEY, AYNTOURA AND TRIPOLI, ALL TO BE OCCUPIED BY 1500 LOCAL AUGUST 7. BEIRUT INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT IS SUPPOSED TO BE REOPENED BY AUGUST 15 UNDER ARAB LEAGUE PROTECTION. AGREEMENT ALSO ESTABLISHES PERMANENT MILITARY COMMITTEE, TO BE LOCATED AT AL HEADQUARTERS AT MELKART HOTEL. BOTH PARTIES ARE TO PRESENT MILITARY PLANS TO REIMPLEMENT CAIRO ACCORDS ON PALESTINIAN STATUS. BOTH CHRISTIAN AND JUNBLATTIST SOURCES EXPRESS SKEPTICISM THAT CEASEFIRE WILL BE OBSERVED. AL-MUHARRIR SPECULATES THAT INTENSE CHRISTIAN PRESSURE ON NABAA WILL UNDERMINE AGREEMENT. CHAMOUN SAID: "WE HAVE DECIDED TO RESPECT THE CEASEFIRE ON THE CONDITION THAT THE OTHER SIDE SUCCEEDS IN CONTROLLING SUBVERSIVE ELEMENTS WITHIN ITS OWN RANKS."

3. ARAB LEAGUE ACTIVITIES. AL DEPUTY KHOLI IS IN DAMASCUS, PRESUMABLY TO MEET WITH SYRIAN LEADERS. CONFIDENTIAL

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GENERAL GHONEIM MET WITH KFOUR LEADERS AUGUST 4. MEETING WAS ACRIMONIOUS, WITH KFOUR LEADERS AGAIN CHARGING LIBYAN SUPPORT OF PALESTINIANS IN JEZZINE AREA, AND OFFERING PHOTOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE. GHONEIM TOLD KFOUR LEADERS THAT KHOLI IN DAMASCUS WOULD BE DISCUSSING LIBYAN QUESTION WITH SYRIANS.

4. SYRIAN-PALESTINIAN AGREEMENT. COMMITTEE

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PROVIDED FOR UNDER SYRIAN-PALESTINIAN AGREEMENT OF JULY 29 IS SUPPOSED TO MEET AUGUST 5 AT SOFAR. FOREIGN MINISTER KHADDAM, GENERAL NAJI Y IL AND BAATHLPARTY LEADER JAMIL SHAYYA ARE TO REPRESENT SYRIA. ;*3$3 FAROUK QADDOUMI, YASSIR ABID RABBO AND COL. SAID SAYYIL ARE TO REPRESENT PLO. AN-NAHAR SAYS KFOUR FRONT HAS NOT YET DECIDED WHETHER OR NOT TO ATTEND, BUT AL-MUHARRIR SAYS KARIM PAKRADOUNI, PHALANGE POLITICAL BUREAU CHIEF, DANY CHAMOUN AND DEPUTY EDMOND RIZQ WILL REPRESENT KFOUR. NO WORD ON LEBANESE LEFTIST PARTICIPATION, AT LEAST PENDING OUTCOME OF MEETING OF JUNBLATT AND FOLLOWERS EARLY AUGUST 5.

5. TELL ZAATAR EVACUATION. SECOND RED CROSS CONVOY AUGUST 4 BROUGHT OUT SOME 240 WOUNDED FROM TELL ZAATAR, AGAIN TO ARAB UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL IN WEST BEIRUT. MANY OF WOUNDED WERE IN WORSE CONDITION TOAN THOSE BROUGHT OUT AUGUST 3. CONVOY RECEIVED SOME SNIPER FIRE BOTH GOING IN TO CAMP AND AFTER DEPARTURE. JOURNALISTS ON THE SPOT UNABLE IDENTIGY WHICH SIDE RESPONSIBLE. NO CONVOY PLANNED FOR AUGUST 5, NEXT PLANNED FOR AUGUST 6. RED CROSS SAYS DELAY IS STRICTLY FOR TECHNICAL REASONS, NOT RELATED TO FIRING INCIDENTS.

6. COUNCIL OF MINISTERS. MEETING OF COUNCIL OF MINISTERS CALLED BY FRAAGIE FOR AUGUST 4 CONCELLED IN ABSENCE OF QUORUM. ONLY FRANGIE, CHAMOUN AND GHASSAN TUEINI APPEARED. MAJID ARSELAN AND ADEL OSSEIRAN JOINED KARAME IN STAYING AWAY. TUEINI AND OSSEIRAN REPORTEDLY HAVE UNDERTAKEN EFFORTS TO MEDIATE BETWEEN FRANGIE AND KARAME AND TO SCHEDULE CONFIDENTIAL

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MEETING WHICH KARAME WILL ATTEND. AN-NAHAR SAYS FRANGIE STILL CONSIDERING DISMISSING KARAME. L'ORIENT SPECULATES THAT FRANGIE-KARAME RECONCILIATION COULD BE BEGINNING OF LEBANESE-LEBANESE RECONCILIATION, SAYING THAT MOSLEM CAMP IS LOOKING TOYPA "POSITIVE PALPABLE" INITIATIVE ON PART OF CHRISTIANS, SUCH AS RESIGNATION OF FRANGIE ON AUGUST 17, ANNIVERSARY OF HIS ASSUMPTION OF POWER SIX YEARS AGO. PIERRE GEMAYEL SAYS COUNCIL MEETING COULD BE BEGINNING OF A "ROUND TABLE."

7. MILITARY SITUATION. SOUTH QUIET. FIRING IN METN, BUT NO GROUND MOVEMENT. HEAVY FIGHTING IN NABAA, WHERE CHRISTIANS CLAIM AREA NO LONGER MILITARILY SIGNIFICANT WHILE ADMITTING PALESTINIANS AND LEFTISTS

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STILL RESISTING IN AREA OF AZZOUZ AND THE GREEK REFRIGERATION PLANT. SEVERAL PALESTINIAN/LEFTIST LEADERS SURRENDERED TO CHRISTIANS, INCLUDING SHIITE MILITARY LEADER AHMED SAFOUANE (LOYAL TO IMAM MUSA SADR) AND LIEUTENANT CHEAYTO OF LEBANESE ARAB ARMY, AND NUMEROUS OF THEIR FOLLOWERS. RIGHTISTS CLAIM CAPTURE OF CONSIDERABLE STORES OF WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION IN HEAVY BLOCK-BY-BLOCK FIGHTING. AL-MUHARRIR SAYS RIGHTISTS USED TANKS AND ARMORED VEHICLES. NABAA POPULATION CONTINUES TO DRIFT ACROSS CONFRONTATION LINE INTO WEST BEIRUT. NATIONAL LIBERALS ANNOUNCE NABAA IS NOW "FREE ZONE" (I.E., "LIBERATED" BY THEMSELVES). NABAA FIGHTING STIMULATED HEAVY ARTILLERY AND SMALL ARMS FIRE ELSEWHERE IN BEIRUT, PARTICULARLY ALONG CONFRONTATION LINE.

8. U.S. AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE HIT. 75MM SHELL HIT U.S. AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE AT YARZE AUGUST 5, CAUSING SOME INTERNAL DAMAGE (SEPTEL). HUNT

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CIVIL DISORDERS, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 05 AUG 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ShawDG
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976BEIRUT06813
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760302-0060
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760885/aaaacwmk.tel
Line Count: 190
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 BEIRUT 6797
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 19 MAR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <19 MAR 2004 by GarlanWA>; APPROVED <26 AUG 2004 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

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US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LEBANESE SITUATION AUG. 5: SHAKY ARAB LEAGUE CEASEFIRE BEGINS; CABINET MEETING POSTPONED; TELL ZAATAR EVACUATION; CHRISTIAN SUCCESSES AT NABAA
TAGS: MILI, PINS, PINT, LE
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006